



IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS IN JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS VIA WHATSAPP MESSENGER

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Abstrak

This study aims to evaluate the pros and cons of using WhatsApp Messenger to help students improve their writing abilities as well as to identify any gaps in the current literature. This study used a classroom action research methodology. To get the data, the researcher used tests, interviews, and observation. The researcher used the steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting when assessing the data. The study shows that using a scientific method helped students write recall texts more effectively. The proportion of scores for cycle I encompasses the rhetorical stages (67.50%), grammar (71.25%), vocabulary (66.25%), meaning clarity (67.50%), and relationship between concepts (63.75%). In cycle II, the percentage of scores encompasses vocabulary (76.25%), clarity of meaning (87.50%), grammar (78.75%), and link between ideas (81.25%). The students engaged in creative teaching and learning activities, showed interest in the teaching and learning processes, and openly expressed their opinions when associating and networking, according to this study. On the other hand, it also experienced difficulties with the teaching and learning procedures. The difficulties were that the majority of students lacked enthusiasm for studying WhatsApp. They must be directed to be disciplined in the classroom and encouraged to ask questions during the questioning phase.

Keywords: Online Language Learning, WhatsApp Messenger, Teaching Writing Skills

INTRODUCTION

Writing refers to the actions taken by pupils to express what they wish to write. The development of hearing comprehension, English ability, English comprehension, and writing ability are the four main goals of teaching English, according to Elizabeth and Rao (2014: 4). Students in junior high school still struggle to create complete phrases in English. According to Bialystok (quoted in Ellis, 1996), the method of functional practice (attempted by the learner to maximize exposure to language) facilitates the development of implicit knowledge in writing through exposure to communicate language use. They are unable to write well-crafted English phrases based on their limited writing process observations since English grammar differs from Indonesian grammar (Sanjaya, 2013). It means that before writing, pupils must thoroughly study and master English grammar so that their work would be grammatically sound. Another issue with learning to write is that students often lack the prerequisite knowledge and skills to understand the subject. It occurs because they don't write much, either in class or at home. According to observation, pupils continue to have trouble producing text without making mistakes. The impact of the kids' first language is one of the causes. The pupils frequently compose sentences in their first language. As a result, their compositions often lack proper grammar and are often meaningless. In actuality, there are structural distinctions between English and Indonesian. This means that when writing in English, pupils must first comprehend the language's grammatical structure before they can begin to compose sentences that are free of the influences of their native tongue. The growth of Covid-19 in Indonesia, which has an impact on education, is another factor contributing to the pupils' writing difficulties. The first and most serious health emergency of this time is the Covid-19 epidemic. Universities, colleges, and institutions have been closed in numerous nations. One of the sectors most severely affected by the coronavirus is education. Even worse, it occurred fast and widely. Face-to-face instruction has been suspended in order to stop the spread of Covid-19, forcing students to do their coursework at home. Additionally, a lot of teachers still lack the necessary skills to instruct using online learning tools, particularly in a variety of subjects. According to certain studies, the majority of students have unfavorable opinions on online education. Nevertheless, they concurred that online education was a workable remedy for the COVID-19 pandemic (Roman et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, teachers and students frequently communicate via WhatsApp messenger when enrolled in online courses. WhatsApp is not only utilized by teachers and students, but also by students with students and teachers with teachers. Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Canvas, Edmodo, Schoology, Google Classroom, and others are utilized as video conference platforms along with Zoom, Meet, Skype, and WebEx. Zhao (2003) found that there is a lot of research on the use of technology in online education that is related to cost savings and efficiency, and that improving the quality and effectiveness of online education necessitates the implementation of a framework in schools. Text messages, voice calls, video calls, photographs, other material, documents, and user locations can all be sent using the messaging program WhatsApp. It can be accessed from a desktop computer as well as from a mobile device. Standard cell phone numbers are utilized by this service. Users could previously only communicate with other users in private conversations or in groups, but in September 2017, WhatsApp unveiled a brand-new business platform that enables the company to offer

customer support to consumers. According to Mistar (2016), WhatsApp is an instant messaging program for smartphones. It enables people to communicate more quickly and easily. Then Jain, Luaran, and Rahman (2016) added that one reason WhatsApp is so well-liked is that its improved features enable users to interact in a number of ways.

Students' writing abilities might be impacted by a variety of factors, such as social media or WhatsApp. The findings of the observations suggested that, in addition to the language barrier, brainstorming was the student's major challenge. I locate a conversation about daily activities in a student chat that exclusively utilizes English and write a brief conversation. They can communicate with their community and find out about news and information. They can improve their ability to write in English. In light of this, the author makes an effort to evaluate the efficacy of using WhatsApp Messenger as one of the online learning strategies for enhancing students' writing abilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching

Together, teaching and learning take place in the classroom and are significant activities. Teaching, according to Kimble and Garmezy (quoted in Brown, 2000: 7), is the act of demonstrating to someone how to perform a task, offering directions, assisting in the study of a subject, dispersing knowledge, or causing someone to understand. According to Hornby (1995: 1225), teaching is the act of showing someone how to do something so that they may do it on their own. The development of hearing comprehension, English ability, English comprehension, and writing ability are the four main goals of teaching English, according to Elizabeth and Rao (2014: 4).

The objectives of teaching and learning English to children, according to Elizabeth and Rao (2014: 4), are (a) for them to understand English easily when spoken at normal speed, (b) for them to speak English correctly and fluently with proper stress and intonation, (c) for them to read English with comprehension and reasonable speed, (d) for them to write neatly and correctly at reasonable speed, (e) for them to enjoy simple poems in English, and (e) for them to gain knowledge of the elements of English. As stated by Nunan (1992: 92), there are three knowledge domains involved in teaching English. The first is mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and English): using the appropriate words in the appropriate order with the proper pronunciation; the second is functions; knowing when precise understanding is not necessary and when clarity of message is necessary (transaction/information exchange); and the third is social and cultural rules and norms; knowing how to take into account that English is being spoken to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

Online Education

Online learning is the process of teaching and learning via the use of technology or electronic media. Students who learn online have the chance to become familiar with many forms of technology that enhance learning. In keeping with Hartley (2001), who stated that "E-learning

is the type of learning and teaching that allows the delivery of teaching materials to students by using the internet media or computer network media" (as referenced in Sagita & Khairunnisa, 2020: 18), this statement is accurate.

Online learning is defined by Ally (2008: 7) as "the use of the internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; to obtain support during the learning process; and to obtain knowledge in order to construct personal meaning and to grow from the learning experience." A further claim made by Campbell (2004) is that "the emphasis of online learning in higher education settings is on the development of metacognitive as well as reflective and collaborative learning" (as cited in Keengwe & Kidd, 2010: jainjain534).

Application WhatsApp

According to Mistar (2016), WhatsApp is a smartphone software for immediate

messaging. It enables people to communicate more quickly and easily. Then According to Jain, Luaran, and Rahman (2016), WhatsApp is especially well-liked due of its improved capabilities that enable users to communicate in a number of ways. It may be said that WhatsApp is a smartphone program that enables users to communicate with one another more quickly and easily through instant messaging. But in reality, WhatsApp offers various features that make it simpler for users to express their thoughts or actions.

WhatsApp is a helpful learning tool, according to Jain, Luaran, and Rahman (2016). It enables posting, sharing content, and participating in online discussions simple and accessible from anywhere at any time. According to Mistar (2016), it is one of the innovative teaching tools used to engage students, hold their interest, and promote enjoyable learning. The WhatsApp application platform's many functions, including the ability to attach photos, share videos, share web links, record films, and more, let students convey their thoughts and ideas. The numerous features of this program can aid students in participating actively in educational activities. It might be said that WhatsApp's features aid students in their academic endeavors.

The Writing Process

Writing and composition are closely related. Both of them mean the same thing. According to Brown (2000: 335), a work must (a) adhere to a set of rules for proper English rhetorical style, (b) demonstrate correct grammar, and (c) be structured in a way that the audience would deem customary. Students' final works are evaluated in part on how well they met a set of criteria that includes content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical usage, and mechanical issues like spelling and punctuation, as well as on how well they compared to model papers that students would imitate.

According to Bialystok (quoted in Ellis, 1996), the method of functional practice (attempted by the learner to maximize exposure to language) facilitates the development of implicit knowledge in writing through exposure to communicate language use. Explicit knowledge develops when students concentrate on the language's structure, and it is aided by "formal

practicing," which involves either being aware of the target language or making an effort to automate previously learned explicit knowledge. The writing ability itself is the implicit knowledge in this situation. More writing exercises can help you improve your writing ability.

Writing instruction

We have gained two key insights into the idea of teaching writing thanks to Richard and Rodgers (quoted in Brown, 2000). The two main contributions are (a) they clarified the components of language-teaching designs that up until this point had been relatively ambiguous. (a) They finally persuaded us to give up the idea that distinct, independent techniques are the fundamental components of methodology. Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005: 27) state that there are some basic rules that apply to both essential concepts and the language education classroom. The list of them is below.

The writing subskill that is taught will differ greatly based on the age and demands of our students. At the primary level, teachers may spend a lot of time showing students how to make letters, words, and short texts with a few words or sentences.

mimicking models. Focusing more on the ability needed to create longer texts, such letters, emails, or compositions, may be necessary at the secondary level.

b. When instructing students in writing, it is important to emphasize both accuracy and the development and delivery of a message.

c. Students occasionally use writing in the classroom to fill in missing words in sentences, take notes for listening comprehension, and respond in one word to writing comprehension questions.

d. We assist students be creative and create their message, or what they want to say, by encouraging them to use the writing process in the classroom.

Detailed Text

Writing a description is the technique of conveying an image using words. The definition of "description" according to Oshima and Hogue (1999: 48) is "writing about how something or someone looks and uses space order." Additionally, according to Knapp and Watkins (2005: 97), description is a crucial aspect of narrative text since it gives the opportunity to establish characters, a sense of place, and major themes. Furthermore, according to Dorothy E. Zemach (2005: 25), a descriptive paragraph conveys how someone, something, or both appears and feels.

Description mimics how things appear, feel, sound, and/or smell. Additionally, it could arouse emotions like joy, loneliness, or dread. It is employed to produce a visual representation of individuals, groups, and even discrete periods of time (George E. Wishon and James M. Burk 2008: 397):

METHOD

his study was an action research project. Action research, according to Kemmis and Taggart (1988: 10), is a technique to improve our understanding of the classroom and as a tool in instruction. The goal of action research is to improve classroom knowledge through the teaching and learning process.

The Study's Subject

The target population for this study was the seventh-graders at SMP Taman Dewasa Ibu Pawiyatan, particularly the class of 20 students in that grade.

Instruments for research

Arikunto (1998) lists several methods for gathering data, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, experiments, and combination techniques. In this study, the researcher employed test, oral interview, and observational methods to gather data.

Data Gathering Method

Using WhatsApp, the researcher has a few methods for gathering information on the students' difficulties with producing descriptive text. The researcher created texts for the students who would be the study's responders as the first stage in gathering data. When the researcher entered the classroom, he or she instructed the students to get a piece of paper ready. Then the researcher requested that the pupils write Each descriptive paragraph. The student-written descriptive texts were gathered by the researcher for analysis.

Statistical Analysis Method

The researcher evaluates the data after gathering it. The researcher also needs certain procedures for data analysis. The researcher used WhatsApp messenger to categorize the activities based on the phases of teaching writing, including pre-, during-, and post-teaching, as well as based on the interview and exam. Based on the findings of the research, the researcher then went into detail about the steps of teaching writing via WhatsApp chat. After teaching writing to the students through WhatsApp, the researcher described how the students' command of English improved.

RESULTS

Using WhatsApp Messenger to help students improve their writing

According to the pupils' observations, writing English sentences is still challenging for them. They can't write well-crafted English sentences based on their scant writing experience because English grammar differs from Indonesian grammar. It means that before writing, pupils must thoroughly study and master English grammar so that their work would be grammatically sound. Another issue with learning to write is that students often lack the prerequisite knowledge and skills to understand the subject. It occurs because they don't write much, either in class or at home. As a result, kids occasionally run into problems when learning to write. According to observation, pupils continue to have trouble producing text without making mistakes. The impact of the kids' first language is one of the causes. The pupils frequently compose sentences in their first language. As a result, their compositions often lack proper grammar and are often meaningless. In actuality, there are structural distinctions

between English and Indonesian. This means that when writing in English, pupils must first comprehend the language's grammatical structure before they can begin to compose sentences that are free of the influences of their native tongue.

The growth of Covid-19, which has an impact on education, is another factor contributing to the students' writing difficulties. In order to stem the spread of Covid-19, classroom instruction is suspended, and the pupils are required to complete their coursework at home. Additionally, a lot of teachers still lack the necessary skills to instruct using online learning tools, particularly in a variety of subjects. According to certain studies, the majority of students have unfavorable opinions on online education. However, they concurred that online education was a workable remedy for the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to teach writing through WhatsApp Messenger, the teacher used five stages: observation, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking. The text was introduced to the class before the exercise began. The teacher quizzed the class on their familiarity with the text's features. The teacher then went on to describe the text's features. The instructor asked the pupils to provide some text examples. In this exercise, the instructor requested that the students mention the text. maybe there had been tales told. It was done to find out how much the students knew about fictional works.

Five minutes were allotted by the teacher for the class to read the material. Additionally, the teacher asked the students to comprehend the text's topic. The teacher checked the pupils' comprehension of the text's content after they had done writing it by asking them questions about it. Additionally, the instructor instructed the students to go to the vocabulary lists on the final page if they came across any challenging words in the texts. The instructor moved on to the following activity. During this exercise, the instructor described the orientation, event, and resolution generic text structures. The teacher questioned the pupils about the definitions of such generic structures during this activity. It was done to ascertain the students' familiarity with those general structural elements. The teacher then went through each of those general structures individually.

The teacher moved on to the following task after defining those general structures. In this activity, the teacher instructed the students to carefully examine the text to determine its text structure or general text structures. The students were then instructed to debate with a companion how to label the relevant passage in the book in the designated slots. The only elements of the text that the students labeled in this assignment were those that referred to general structures like orientation, event, and resolution. The instructor moved on to the following exercise. The kids filled in the blanks after the teacher read the text. The teacher instructed the students to copy the text into their individual books before filling in the blanks. After the pupils had finished copying the text, the teacher read it aloud as they filled in the blanks. All of the kids could complete the assignments, according to the observation. The outcomes of the texts that the students in cycles I and II wrote are listed below.

Table 1. The Scores of Texts Written by the Students in Cycle I and Cycle II

No.	Indicators	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	The steps of rhetorical	67.50%	78.75%

2	Grammar	71.25%	78.75%
3	Vocabulary	66.25%	76.25%
4	Clarity of meaning	67.50%	87.50%
5	Relation between ideas	63.75%	81.25%
Mean		67.25%	80.69%

Table 1 shows the improvement of the students' writing skill through WhatsApp messenger. In cycle I, the percentage of scores covers steps of rhetorical (67.50%), grammar (71.25%), vocabulary (66.25%), clarity of meaning (67.50%), and relation between ideas (63.75%). In cycle II, the percentage of scores covers steps of rhetorical (78.75%), grammar (78.75%), vocabulary (76.25%), clarity of meaning (87.50%), and relation between ideas (81.25%). Based on this result, it could be stated that the results of students' writing in cycle II was better than in cycle I. Below is detailed improvement of the students' score in writing the text.

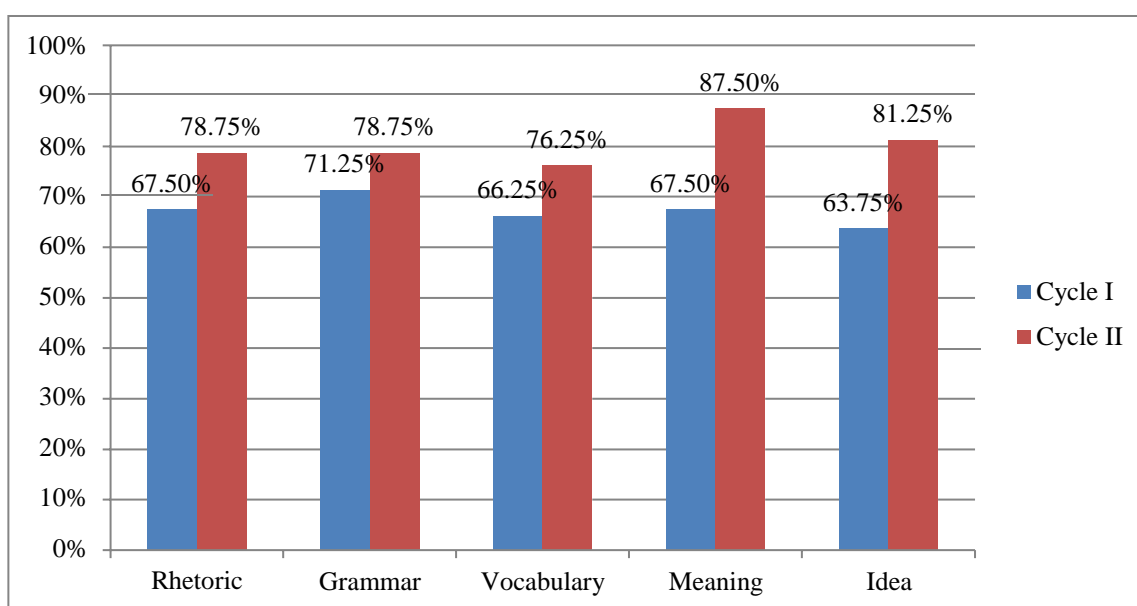


Figure. 1 The Scores of Descriptive Texts Written by the Students in Cycle I and Cycle II

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers and English teachers are using WhatsApp as a learning tool to help students improve their descriptive writing skills. This includes using WhatsApp for opening, core, and closing activities. Then the often used features, such as calls (phone) directly, photographs, videos, documents, and WhatsApp groups. Ease of use thanks to WhatsApp's capabilities, ease of use, and applicability to a wide range of circles. Students' ability to write descriptive text has improved as a result of utilizing the WhatsApp app. WhatsApp is a helpful learning tool that allows posting, sharing content, and participating in online discussions simple and accessible from anywhere at any time, claim Jain, Luanan, and Rahman (2016). According to Mistar (2016), it is one of the innovative teaching tools used to engage students, hold their interest, and promote enjoyable learning. The WhatsApp

application platform's many functions, including the ability to attach photos, share videos, share web links, record films, and more, let students convey their thoughts and ideas. The numerous features of this program can aid students in participating actively in educational activities. It might be said that WhatsApp's features aid students in their academic endeavors.

According to Evyta Tri Handayani and Dyah Aminatun's research (2020), using a WhatsApp group to teach writing can have a favorable impact on how writing is taught and learned in junior high school. In addition, it can help students improve their writing skills. The viewpoints of the students, who believe that there have been more positive than negative reactions to this media, support this outcome. Additionally, the outcome demonstrates that one of the suitable learning platforms for Indonesian education is the WhatsApp group. The research by Hasliani Wibowo, Andi Muhammad Yauri, and Uswatun Hasanah from the year 2021 also demonstrates how teachers used WhatsApp to teach writing by exploiting the app's characteristics, however the use of WhatsApp was not without its drawbacks. Application was subpar because it was advised that teachers vary their lesson plans to pique students' attention. Students claim that using this tool can make collecting homework much easier.

The advantages and difficulties of using WhatsApp messenger to improve students' writing abilities. Students used their creativity in teaching and learning activities, showed interest in the processes of teaching and learning, and freely shared their presumptions when associating and networking thanks to the use of WhatsApp messenger. However, it also presented difficulties for the teaching and learning process. The advantages were that most students were not interested in studying via WhatsApp Messenger and that PowerPoint was not used in class. In the questioning phase, the pupils must be convinced to ask questions. The need for classroom discipline must be communicated to the kids. WhatsApp is a helpful learning tool that allows posting, sharing content, and participating in online discussions simple and accessible from anywhere at any time, claim Jain, Luaran, and Rahman (2016). According to Mistar (2016), it is one of the innovative teaching tools used to engage students, hold their interest, and promote enjoyable learning. The WhatsApp application platform's many functions, including the ability to attach photos, share videos, share web links, record films, and more, let students convey their thoughts and ideas. Through a number of features on the application, it can assist students in participating actively in educational activities.

The ease and low cost of use of this app are two of its main benefits. It also makes learning possible outside of the classroom. Learning has been facilitated by teachers' after-hours access to pupils. The other aspect of the app that inspires policy makers to use it for teachers' professional development is the accessibility of educational resources and the potential for learning at any time and anywhere. It might be said that WhatsApp's features aid students in their academic endeavors. According to the findings of the interviews and the advantages revealed by the documentation, using WhatsApp to help students improve their text-description writing resulted in an improvement over not using WhatsApp. Teachers use WhatsApp because it offers features like photographs, videos, documents, WhatsApp groups, and phone conversations, so they don't easily grow tired using it. The features offered make it simpler for teachers to facilitate learning. WhatsApp, a free app that is simple to use and can

be used for sharing comments, posts, images, videos, sounds, and documents, is said to provide collaborative and collaborative learning facilities online between teachers and students or fellow students at home or at school, according to Barhomi (2015:223). The researcher discovered various issues that the teacher and students encountered during the teaching and learning processes, which were in line with the findings of the observation. When teaching writing, the teacher did not provide the students with sufficient text models. When teaching writing, the teacher hardly ever talked about the texts' potential authors, motivations, and locations. Rarely did the teacher describe the text under discussion's social function or purpose. There was no discussion regarding the text's construction between the students' group and the teacher. Rarely did the teacher assist the pupils in revising and editing their texts. The instructor didn't examine the pupils' edit texts. The children lacked a sufficient vocabulary and a working understanding of the words. The students struggled to begin writing because they lacked the writing skills necessary to properly convey their ideas and choose the right words. When the teacher asked the class to write something, they struggled with the spelling and punctuation.

CONCLUSION

According to the study, (1) students' recount text writing abilities improved thanks to a scientific approach. The proportion of scores for cycle I encompasses the rhetorical stages (67.50%), grammar (71.25%), vocabulary (66.25%), meaning clarity (67.50%), and relationship between concepts (63.75%). In cycle II, the percentage of scores encompasses vocabulary (76.25%), clarity of meaning (87.50%), grammar (78.75%), and link between ideas (81.25%). (2) The students employed their creativity in teaching and learning activities, showed interest in the teaching and learning processes, and freely shared their presumptions about associating and networking. On the other hand, it also experienced difficulties with the teaching and learning procedures. The difficulties were that the majority of students lacked enthusiasm for studying WhatsApp. They need to be encouraged to participate in the questioning phase and given instructions on how to behave in class.

The researcher discovered that using WhatsApp messaging to teach writing is essential after examining the research's data. As a result, the author would like to provide some recommendations. The students place a high value on developing their competence through significant activities. They ought to study writing on their own terms. Through writing exercises, they should increase their understanding of the teaching and learning process. Teachers should become more proficient, especially in terms of their understanding of WhatsApp and their ability to instruct. Additionally, they must consider their personalities in order to enhance their subject matter expertise and teaching abilities. In front of the class, they must uphold and demonstrate good personalities, attitudes, and actions.

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